Israel Zwerling, M.D., Ph.D., passed away last year. He was a man who made things possible—a man who helped people make their dreams come true. In order to convey how he was the guiding force and support in the development of dance therapy the feeling of the times will be portrayed in a personal manner.

Memories . . .

My association with Zwerling began in September 1966. I was apprenticing with Irmgard Bartenieff and Martha Davis using Effort-Shape Analysis (now known as Laban Movement Analysis—LMA) to research nonverbal communication interactional patterns in family therapy. This research was being conducted at the behest of Zwerling, who was the family therapist. Zwerling became the Director of Bronx State Hospital (later to become Bronx Psychiatric Center) when I became his research assistant on a part-time basis. In September 1967, I was hired full time, spending half of this time for the purpose of beginning a dance therapy program throughout the hospital. By this time, our research team of Bartenieff, Davis, and Queyquep was joined by Claire Schmais. This team went to a weekly seminar on nonverbal communication which was
attended by well-known psychiatrists, psychologists and anthropologists. Zwerling was fascinated with Bartenieff and her work in both dance therapy and Effort-Shape and felt that a contribution could be made to this new area of study.

Though Zwerling hired me to begin a dance therapy program, he advised us every step of the way. First, he told us which chief of service would be amenable to having dance therapy for his patients. When Schmais and I arrived on his ward, the chief said: "You want to do therapy? That's great!"

Next, Zwerling wisely advised us that we needed to educate staff about what dance therapy could do for the patients. We contacted the heads of nursing who helped set up an orientation for the charge nurses of each ward (some 40 people). When a charge nurse decided that dance therapy would be good for their patients, we had an orientation for the ward staff. We were even able to have a staff member assigned to be in the patients’ sessions on a regular basis. Fairly soon, more wards were requesting dance therapy sessions and Zwerling agreed to hire more dance therapists. Miriam Roskin Berger, who later became the Director of the Creative Arts Therapies Department when it was first formed, joined us at this time. Other alumni of this period include Johanna Climenko, Lucille Ormay, Roberta Shlasko, Sasha Silberstein, Florette Orleans and Dianne Dulicai. Schmais continued to work part-time here and at Hunter College and Bartenieff began doing dance therapy with the cognitively impaired.

We were extremely fortunate. Even though most of the hospital personnel referred to us as the touchy, feely people and it was heard on more than one occasion: "Here comes the butterflies," Zwerling never waivered in his support of us. As a matter of fact he encouraged us to keep up our proselytizing and training of staff. He was very insistent that in our communications with staff about what occurred with patients in our sessions, that we stick to our language—the language of movement. The philosophy that we were to teach staff about what we do and not try to explain this in a language other than our own fortified us on our journey.

Many events were concurrently happening throughout this period. The weekly seminars on nonverbal communication continued. Zwerling allowed us to train nonhospital personnel who took dance therapy workshops privately. Further, he suggested that we in dance therapy and Effort-Shape do two things: Train interested staff to do dance therapy and teach Effort-Shape to those staff interested in learning movement behavior.

Thus, we began a dance therapy training seminar. Approximately eight people enrolled. We met twice a week for two hours each time, for eight weeks or so. After the training, our students, mostly mental health therapy aides, went back to their wards and began dance therapy sessions. My job was to supervise them. In our ignorance we assumed that